



El Niño

lacounty.gov/elniño

KEY POINTS

- El Niño may bring heavy rain, wind, flooding, landslides, mountain snow and damage to the coastline.
- El Niño may impact health in LA County.
- You can prepare now to lower the impact El Niño may have on your health.

SAFEGUARDING YOUR HEALTH DURING EL NIÑO

What is El Niño?

El Niño is a weather event that usually brings storms with heavy rain and wind during the winter to California and the Southern part of the U.S. The last major El Niño in 1998 resulted in 17 deaths, over 100,000 evacuations, and more than half a billion dollars in damage in California.

How can El Niño affect your health?

El Niño storms can affect your health by causing injuries and disease outbreaks. The rain may cause hazardous driving conditions, drowning, injuries from landslides, falling trees and flying objects, and electrocutions from downed power lines. It may also lead to disease outbreaks from consumption of contaminated drinking water or unrefrigerated food. Power outages can result in life-threatening loss of oxygen or mobility for the electrically dependent. Health and safety concerns may include:

- Injuries or deaths due to landslides, mudslides, or flooding
- Injury due to hypothermia (dangerously low body temperature)
- Fear or anxiety due to the news
- Broken sewage disposal systems (septic tanks)
- Illness from ocean water polluted with bacteria and contaminants from storm runoff onto beaches
- More mosquitos and a higher risk of the diseases they spread due to more standing water
- More mold due to increased moisture and lack of ventilation
- Spoiled food due to power outages
- Decreases in water supply, electricity, gas, and fuel services
- Carbon monoxide poisoning (a deadly, odorless gas) from unsafe heating sources such as indoor fires, faulty furnances, heaters, woodburning stoves, electrical generators, and portable stoves

How can you prepare for El Niño?

WEATHER PROOF YOUR HOME AND CAR.

Clear outdoor drains and gutters of any leaves, dirt, or debris. Secure trash, recycling bins and other items that could blow or float away. Make sure your car's tires have good tread and that your windshield wipers work well. Turn on your headlights when driving in the rain.

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS, MAKE A PLAN, AND BE READY.

No matter what type of emergency you may face or where you live, it's important to know your neighbors. Right after an emergency, response teams may be delayed and your neighbors may be the first ones to offer you help. Make a household emergency plan and work with your neighbors to create a neighborhood emergency plan. Visit www.bereadyla.org.

CREATE AN EMERGENCY KIT THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF YOUR FAMILY AND PETS.

Prepare a kit that meets your family's needs (kids, older adults, and pets) for 3 days. Make sure to add extra prescription medicines. Add a list of important documents and information, like emergency contacts and evacuation routes. Keep your kit in a place that's easy to reach.

Learn how else to prepare for El Niño, here: <http://www.lacounty.gov/elniño>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Los Angeles County, Department of Public Health, Emergency Preparedness and Response Program
<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/hea/library/topics/eprp>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/ninonina.html>

